

question whether Life should be considered as an impulse—a special energy—which acts upon Matter or as the resultant of a particular compound of Matter—whether, in short, Life creates protoplasm or is created by it. Apart from this nitrogenous substance, Life does not occur: but the composition of protoplasm is by no means uniform, and those who assert that it must be the origin of Life may be mistaking a necessary condition for an essential cause. We speak of a current of electricity as generated by chemical action: but we do not mean that, apart from this action, electricity is non-existent.

To give a homely illustration of the difference between a condition and a cause: I cannot go out unless I find my boots, but I do not go out because I find them. We have, it may be repeated,

no direct knowledge of Life: in itself it lies beyond the field of our sensations. The view that is taken of its nature may, then, depend very greatly upon the predilections of the philosopher. If he is inclined towards a mechanical theory of the Universe he may be discomposed by the eccentricities of Life, but will endeavour to explain them as the inevitable, although complicated, results of mechanical causes.

There is, however, an argument, derived from our observations of the manifestations of Life, which appears to tell strongly against these materialistic conclusions. If Life is the result of

we should not expect it capriciously to disregard the tendency to uniformity which enables us to calculate the sequences of material phenomena. and even to make quantitative estimates of the things which underlie them. But Life seems to delight in displaying its indifference to rule. It provides animals with special organs for particular purposes—for instance, with eyes for seeing, with